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*An Old Timer's  
Recollection  
of the  
Red River Colony*

THE SOCIAL  
AND DOMESTIC LIFE

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OUTSTANDING PERSONALITIES

by

*Rev. E. C. R. Pritchard, B.A.*

*Author of The Red River Settlement*

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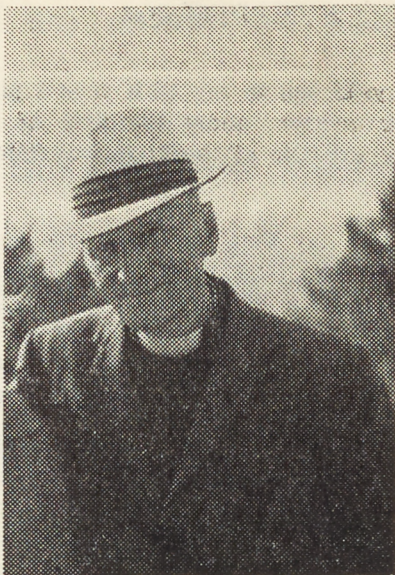












***Rev. E. C. R. Pritchard —  
The Old-Timer in his  
Eighty-Eighth Year.***

***To  
My Dear Niece  
Mrs. Florence I. Glowe  
of Winnipeg***

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## *Preface*

Just over a year ago in my 86th year I published the first book I had ever written, under the title of "The Red River Settlement." The sub-title of the book was "Memoirs - History - Adventure."

I am happy to say that my book was very well received and within a year the first edition was sold out. I had the good fortune to have a niece in Winnipeg, Mrs. Florence I. Glowe, who voluntarily accepted the task of being my sales manager and to her I owe a deep debt of gratitude as well as to so many who wrote letters of appreciation and congratulation.

I am encouraged therefore to venture forth, with a second volume, under much the same title. There is so much I could have said and want to say respecting the early days. I want to write something of the social life of the settlement as I recall it. The general impression is that life in those days was severe—all hardship and endurance. The very contrary is true. There was much merriment and enjoyment. There was no commercial entertainment, but people made their own fun and amusement.

I wrote to my cousin, Jack Bompas (the Rev. J. Bompas, retired) and asked him if he would write something of the social life, as he recalled it in the early settlement, and I am greatly indebted to him for his contribution—"All for fun in the old days." You'll enjoy it. See page 7.

I also want to write of the French settlement (St. Boniface) and of the Indian settlement (St. Peter's). What I have to say is not so much as an historian but rather of my earliest recollections and impressions, of some of the outstanding personalities, of the Presbyterians and of the Anglican church and to record some of the old Red River stories. This in brief is the content of an old timers recollection of the Red River Colony.

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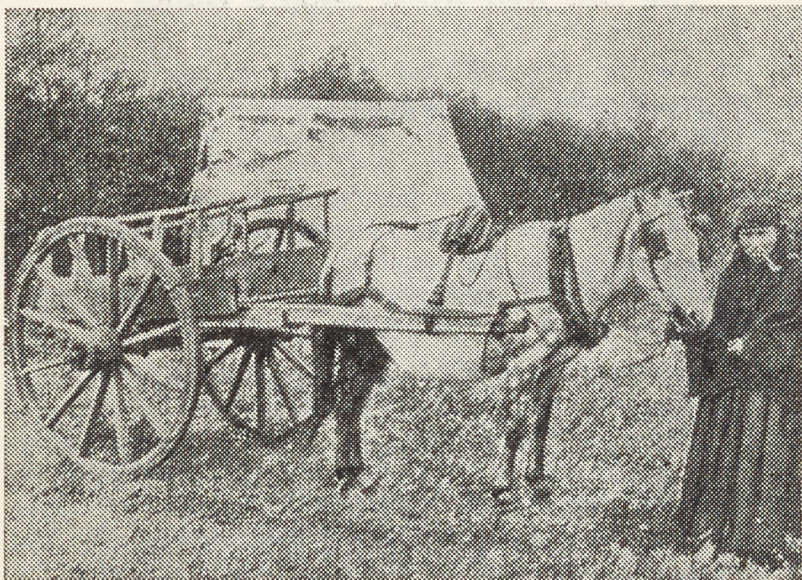
# THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT

## *The Old Red River Square Dance*

My mind goes back to our old home on the banks of the Red River.

There is to be a dance at our house tonight. There were no dance halls or orchestras in those days. The dances were held in people's homes. The furniture, such as it was and what there was of it, was set aside, chairs, boxes and benches were put around in readiness for the dance.

Edward, the local fiddler, was first to arrive, soon after dark the guests began to come, in bob-sleighs and cutters. Edward is tuning up, his feet keeping time with the fiddle, the guests are seated around. Harry, an elder brother of mine, is "the caller-off." Six or eight couples take their places to form the square and I hear the call "Dress your partners, all join hands and circle to the left," "Break and Swing," "Alamande left" and "doe-ce-doe." What that means I didn't know then, or do I know now, but it called for movement. "Promenade all," the dance was in full swing. The only thing I didn't like about it was, that I had to go to bed early in the afternoon so that I might be allowed to stay up for the dance. It was pretty well an all-night affair. Refreshments were served about midnight, a good old cup of Hudson's Bay tea, cake and cookies, etc.—that's where I chiefly featured. Between each reel the guests visited around and light-hearted conversation prevailed. It was a real, communal party, a neighborhood gathering and all were happy and enjoyed themselves.



### ***The Old Red River Cart***

No axle grease in the early days. You could hear the squeak  
of the Red River Cart a mile away.



## *The Red River Jig*

The Red River Jig was an outstanding feature on these occasions. It was what we called a step-dance.

Edward was at his best when the fiddle called for the Jig. The gent led his partner to the center and the steppers held forth; while the others watched and applauded.

The men's performance was interesting and I think quite skillful—the ladies of course wore long skirts and though you could observe a rhythm movement, they all seemed the same, but they looked as if they enjoyed it.

It was the custom for any man to "cut out" the occupier of the stage or to take with him a new partner for their turn at the Jig.

The old Red River Jig, like the old Red River Cart had a character all its own.

## *Tight Money - Two Old Red River Stories*

An old neighbor of ours, whose husband's name was William, intercepted a passerby on his way to Winnipeg, our shopping centre, and addressed him thus, "Tomorrow is William's birthday—here is 25 cents, will you buy me 5 cents worth of currants, 5 cents worth of raisins, 5 cents worth of candied peel, and the rest in sugar."

If the same incident happened today, poor old William would have a pretty poor birthday cake.

## ***Old Charlie Gets a Shock***

Old Charlie was our Church Sexton. As I recall him, he was old and bent. He rang the bell, lighted the stove and took up the collection.

One Sunday, someone put 25 cents in the offering. Old Charlie remarked, "My stars, he put 25 cents in the plate—now, that man has money in the bank."

True, money was tight, there wasn't much in circulation but we had plenty of good food—fish out of the river, catfish, pike and goldeye, game of all kinds, pheasants, ducks, geese, farmyard fowls and vegetables. In contrast today, we have plenty of money, pensions, etc., food in fancy packets, but lacking the richness, the flavour and the nutriment of the old days. The cows knew nothing of "creamo" in those days. We just had cream.

## ***All For Fun***

Contributed by Rev. J. Bompas (Cousin Jack)

My mother often used to tell us stories about old Kildonan and the people who lived there in the early days. Many of her stories were about one of her brothers, probably her favorite brother, Angus Pritchard, whose nickname was Clint. It seems that my Uncle Clint was a confirmed prankster. He was lucky, or clever, because he seldom got caught. He could pull off the worst practical joke and get away with it.

Those were the horse and buggy days, and in winter, horse and cutter of course. Most of the young men, and some of the older ones, had good driving horses. They cared for them properly, kept them in first class condition, and took great pride in



displaying their style and speed. Naturally there was a good deal of rivalry, as to who had the best looking and fastest horse, or team.

And there were races. Strangely enough, these often took place on Sunday, in spite of the Minister's disapproval. You see, it was like this. In winter, on Sunday monings, they all drove to church with their horses and cutters. The horses would be blanketed and tied to the hitching rail, or if the weather was cold they would be put into the stable. After the service, they would be "rarin' to go."

The river was just below the Presbyterian Church, and the ice would be thick enough so that it was perfectly safe to travel on. The horses were sharp-shod; and if there was a skiff of snow on top of the ice, why, you couldn't wish for a better race-track. You drove your horse down into the river and started for home. If another rig came up beside you, all you had to do was tighten the reins a little more, and the race was on. Your horse wouldn't let the other horse pass if he could help it. You might say it just happened, at first; but there can be no doubt that before long races were planned.

Every fine Sunday after church there were real races on the river. The prophet might say, "And this thing became a sin." But that is another story, and I must get to my point.

Jacob had a fine black mare, a perfect beauty, and she was speedy. Naturally Jacob was very proud of her. He took as good care of her as a mother takes of her baby. So Uncle Clint decided to play a joke on him. One dark night, after old Jacob had gone to bed, Uncle Clint and another young scamp took a bar of soap and some hot water, sneaked into the stable, and lathered the black mare from neck to tail. Then they took down the harness and carefully set it on the mare, so that it would make distinct marks all over her. Then they lifted it off again, even more carefully, and hung it up. They put out

their light, went out and closed the stable door; they pounded on the door of the house, let out a whoop and a yell, and ran.

Jacob wakened with a start. Trembling all over he crawled out of bed, and slipped into his clothes. He seemed to know that something was wrong and his thoughts went first to his precious mare. Perhaps she had been stolen. His hand was shaking so that he did not get the lantern lit with the first match, and he had to strike another. Pulling on his coat and cap he hastened to the stable. In their hurry the boys had left the door partly open. Aha! Just what he had suspected. He went in and held up the lantern. The terrible truth dawned on him. The boys had been out with his mare and had cruelly overdriven her till she came back all lathered with sweat. One look was all he could endure. He did not faint, but felt sick at the sight. He staggered back to the house and slumped into a chair, his elbows on his knees, and his face in his hands, and he moaned to his good wife, "Oh Kerstie, Kerstie, my mare is ruined." "What that?" she asked. "The boys have ruined my mare."

By this time Kerstie was dressed. She was of a more practical turn of mind, and she wanted to know just what had happened. She took the lantern from her husband, started for the stable and he followed her.

They examined the precious animal. They felt her trembling flanks. The foam stuck to their hands. They looked at each other. It was not the lather of sweat, but of good Royal Crown soap. There is no record of what they said. They decided to keep it a dark secret. Then how did the whole settlement come to know about it? Well, did you ever hear of a boy who could keep a secret?



## *The Anglican Church*

### *In The Red River Settlement*

The Lork Selkirk settlers were predominantly if not wholly Presbyterian. The first contingent arrived in 1811. There was no Presbyterian Minister in the country to care for them. In the year 1820, the Rev. John West, the first Anglican Clergyman arrived, establishing St. John's Mission, or as it was called—the Upper Church—now the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

It was as I have said, John Pritchard who had some responsibility in the choice of an Anglican Clergyman to serve the spiritual needs of a Presbyterian settlement. John West was followed by Rev. David Jones from South Wales, England, and Rev. John Cochrane was his assistant. Cochrane was a very energetic parson. I heard a lot about him in my young days. His work mainly centered about 12 miles down the river to the north, where he built a fine stone church, St. Andrew's, usually spoken of as the "Lower Church"—much of the work was done with his own hands.

Some time later a church was built about half way between the upper and the "Lower Church" and was known as it is today, Middlechurch and dedicated to St. Paul. That was the church where I was baptized and attended in my boyhood days. Further down the river, near where the Red River empties into Lake Winnipeg, another church was built, St. Peter's. This was known as the Indian Settlement. These four churches, St. John's, St. Paul's, St. Andrew's and St. Peter's stand as monuments to the zeal and energy of the pioneer Anglican clergy of the early Red River Settlement.

## *An Experiment in Church Union*

What about our Presbyterian brethren during all these years? Who ministered to them, baptised their children, married and buried them? The answer is—the Anglican Church. Our clergy out of the charity of their hearts adapted the services of our Book of Common Prayer to the needs and predilections of the Scotch Presbyterians.

The Presbyterians were scornful of what they called “prayers from a book,” of kneeling down and getting up again. Their practice was to sit for one long extemporaneous prayer which gave rise to the humorous little jibe—

“Presby - Presby - never a bend  
Sit ye down, on man’s chief end”

while they in turn retorted

“Pisky (Episcopal) Pisky, Amen  
Down on your knees and up again.”

As a compromise our Anglican clergy adapted the Prayer Book liturgy accordingly and introduced an extempore prayer and admitted them to Holy Communion which they administered to them in their pews instead of requiring them to go up to the Altar-rail.

For a period of thirty years the Anglican Church thus continued their ministrations among the Presbyterians. As an experiment in church union it accomplished nothing, for in the year 1851, when Rev. John Black, the first Presbyterian minister came to the Red River, the 300 Presbyterians then in the settlement returned to their own persuasion. The obvious inference is that church union, if it is ever to be effective must commence at the bottom and not at the top. However, it was a period of “peaceful co-existence” and mutual forbearance.



John Pritchard, writing in these early days says, and I quote from his letter on the moral tone of the settlement—

"The Settlement in general is advancing to prosperity with rapid strides, but what is most to be admired is the moral feeling that prevails among the settlers. Theft and crime are here unknown—with the exception of a trivial assault case some four years ago, not a single case tinged with crime had been brought under our consideration. This speaks volumes and can scarcely meet its parallel in the civilized world, and when I consider that the largest portion of our population has been drawn from the wilds that surround us, it is truly astonishing."

## *The Scotch - The French - The Indian*

The Red River Settlement comprised three distinct groups. The Scotch, the French, the Indian.

### *The Scotch*

The Scotch occupied the territory just north of Winnipeg known as Kildonan.

Had Lord Selkirk hand-picked his colony from the whole of Europe, he could not have done better than he did in bringing out to this remote and unknown country, these sturdy Highlanders of the Orkney Islands, north of Scotland. They proved worthy in every way to justify his philanthropic scheme. They were industrious, frugal and capable of high endurance. Nothing has ever been recorded in their history to be other than honourable. Crime was unknown among them.

The names of the Gunns', the Sutherlands', the Munroes', the Hendersons', and the Macleods' are names that signify un-

blemished character that mark the history of the settlement. They were good neighbours, friendly and adaptable.

The highway running through East Kildonan is called "Henderson Road" after Sam Bob (they used the double-barrel Christian names) who was Reeve of the municipality for several years—all honour to the old Scotch Settlers.

## ***The French Settlement St. Boniface***

We all know how the Scotch settlers came to the Red River. It's not generally known how the French came to occupy the territory on the east side of the river, known as St. Boniface. I was anxious to know and I wrote to the Provincial Archives and obtained the following information which is interesting.

The French antedated the Scotch settlement. The territory was first discovered and claimed by LaVerendrye for the King of France in 1738. In 1806, the first whites couple to settle in the area, Jean Baptiste Lagimodiere and Marie Anne Cabourg, canoed there from Quebec. Marie Anne is alleged to have been the first white woman in the Canadian West. Their fifth child became the mother of Louis Riel, the leader of the Metis during the Northwest Rebellion of 1885.

## ***Further Information - French Settlement***

The colony on the east bank of the Red River had at first been of German-Swiss origin.

Lord Selkirk in 1817 introduced into his Red River settlement a band of discharged Swiss mercenaries who, it was hoped



would not only swell the size and productivity of the settlement, but also afford it some protection. The soldiers, however, made poor settlers and soon moved off to the south, but they left the name, St. Boniface, patron Saint of Germany.

With the coming of Fathesr Provencher and Dumoulin, soon to be followed by Canadian colonists in Quebec, the character of the territory was definitely French.

St. Boniface city is the most heavily industrialized area in Greater Winnipeg. The French and Canadian culture of the city has been further reinforced by its schools, by the College de St. Boniface—affiliated with the University of Manitoba. It has a fine hospital, a cathedral and Basilica.

Generally speaking, I venture to say that the French have made a very substantial and worthy contribution to the growth and development of the Red River Settlement.

## *The Indian Settlement*

The Scotch (Kildonan) The French (St. Boniface) The Indian (St. Peter's - north of Selkirk)

For the Indian, it was a period of unsettlement. They were happily settled, until the white man invaded their land. They occupied the area immediately north of Selkirk, with St. Peter's church as their center, and known as the Indian Settlement. A small group of them settled in East St. Paul, about 8 miles north of Winnipeg, near my old home. They were well behaved, friendly subservient. I have never heard of them doing anything wrong. We had no reason ever to be afraid of them. It's true there was the unhappy skirmish known as the battle of Seven Oaks, when someone inadvertently fired a shot which touched off a very regrettable incident.

There was also the Riel Rebellion in 1885, the outcome of which was the execution of Louis Riel in Regina, but this too might well have been avoided and the Indian, as a class could not be held responsible. The Indians were seemingly contented with their lot, they were poor, dependent and made their living with game and fish and with employment among white settlers.

They too, made a worthy contribution to the peace and happiness of the Red River Settlement.

### ***Polygamy Among the Indians***

I don't think that polygamy was generally practiced among the Indians, though it was not forbidden and it was known that many of them had more than one wife.

### ***Poesas - A Notable Character***

I remember one Indian in particular, whose name was Poesas—someone asked him once how many wives he had—he replied, "I've only got two now, I gave one to my son."

### ***New Year's Day - A Happy Event for the Indians***

New Year's Day was a great day for the Indians. They visited around the community with the happy salutation "Happy Nu - gee" as they expressed it. They expected a hanoout much in the same way as the children do on Hallow-Eve, and they were seldom if ever disappointed.



## *The Rev. James Seetee, The First Native Clergyman*

The Rev. James Seetee, a full-blooded Indian, was the first native Clergyman of the Canadian Northwest. My recollection of him goes back to the days of his retirement when he was frequently seen on the campus of St. John's College.

**A Dynamic Character**—I believe he was singularly successful in his Ministry and was highly respected. Some very good stories are told of "Old Setee" as he was kindly and reverently addressed. I think they are worth recording.

**Story No. 1**—Changing his regular Sunday schedule, he was determined that the change in the time for the Service should be forgotten—"Next Sunday, God willing I'll be here at 2 o'clock instead of three. Now don't forget the change of time, next Sunday, God willing I'll be here at 2 o'clock." Each time he would preface the change of time with the proverbial "God willing." At the end of the service, he repeated the announcement "God willing, I'll be here at 2 o'clock. Yes, I'll be here anyway."

**Story No. 2**—A good old church family in the Cathedral Parish of St. John's, a Mrs. B., used to frequently entertain old Mr. Seetee in her home. One day she saw the old gentleman wending his way to her residence—there is Mr. Seetee coming, I simply can't have him this time, I have visitors." When the old dear arrived, she explained that she couldn't put him up as she had visitors. Old Seetee replied, "I stay anyway." But Mr. Seetee, I have no room for you." "I'll find a place," said Mr. Seetee. He simply would not be put off.

When time for retiring came, he found a place on the floor in the upstairs hallway. Then he found a bag of feathers

which he used for a pillow. Somehow the feathers got out and in the morning he appeared with his bushy head of hair covered with feathers. "Mrs. B," he said, "I am an owl." "One could not help liking the old man," said Mrs. B.

**Story No. 3**—I have this story direct from the Rev. J. G. Anderson then Rector of St. Peter's church, north of Selkirk and afterwards Bishop of Moosonee. Frequently Mr. Seetee arrived in time for Church Service and announced that he wanted to preach a "farewell sermon," as he was leaving for a time. This happened on more than one occasion and in his sermon there was no mention of a "farewell."

One Sunday, Mr. Anderson saw the old man coming and he prepared to put him off by saying, "Well Mr. Seetee, what part of the Service would you like to take?" "I'll take the pulpit," was his reply. These stories are characteristic of the dynamic personality of the Rev. James Seetee.





***"My Mother and I"***

Taken about the time of my ordination, over 60 years ago.



## *The Domestic Life of The Community*

Life must have been very dull and prosaic in those early days; no Picture Shows, no radio, no television, no commercial entertainment—whatever did people do for diversion? As a matter of fact, I venture to say that there was less boredom in those early days than there is now. People were too busy to be bored. I cite my old home as typical. We each had our living to make out of the narrow strip of land assigned to each settler. The land was so surveyed in narrow lots, three miles long from the Red River, so that as many as possible could have a river frontage. It was rightly called the Red River Settlement for each settler had a river Lot. It might also be well described as a “do-it-yourself” period.

Everything we had came off the land. We grew our own grain, wheat, barley, oats, vegetables, etc. We raised our own cattle, churned our own butter, smoked our own bacon, baked our own bread and it was all so good, so nourishing, so satisfying. What we are compelled to accept now as food is a poor substitute for what we engaged in the good old days. We moderns hardly know or have forgotten what good food is like.

Moreover we tanned the cow-hides and my mother made our shoes—they were called beef-shoes. We bought deer-hides, out of which our moccasins were made, using the dried sinews of the animals for stitching. In addition to our regular stock we kept a few sheep, so we had our own wool and yarn. We had to card the wool—that was a process of combing out the wool, making it ready for the spinning wheel. My mother had a spinning wheel and spun yarn which we used for making mitts and socks. Later on we got a knitting machine and that took care of all our household needs. We all had to knit our own mitts, etc. I still know how to knit. Often in my parish



visiting, I would pick up someone's knitting and demonstrate my ability to knit, evoking surprise and wonder as to how I came to know the art of knitting. Not only did we supply our home needs, but my mother used to barter mitts and socks for groceries in Winnipeg.

My mother was very skillful with her needle, made all our clothes, made my first clerical suit of which I was very proud. I was also the proud possessor of a beaver coat, with cap and otter collar made by her skillful hands. The skins came direct from the Indians, through the Hudson's Bay Company.

My mother won innumerable prizes for her needlework and cookery at the local exhibition in East Kildonan—prizes for the best darning, fancywork and the best home-made bread.

Such was the domestic life of the Red River Settlement. Every home was a hive of industry. Each one had to pull his own weight and everyone was happy.

## ***No Juvenile Delinquency in the Early Days***

We knew nothing of juvenile delinquency long ago. The obvious reason being that we were kept too busy to get into mischief. The young people of today, perhaps have too much leisure, no chores, no wood to get in for the kitchen stove. No - this, that and the other to do. Forgive me, if I seem too critical of modern times. I don't mean to be—it's just that we are living under very different circumstances and each period in human history has its different problems. It's enough to say that the early settlers were industrious people.

# *The Red River Settlement*

## *and*

# *The Province of Manitoba*

As I said elsewhere, this is not intended to be a history. It's just the recollections of an old timer concerning those I have known or heard of in the early days. To tell therefore of how the Red River settlement became the Province of Manitoba is a bit out of my depth but it's interesting and something should be said about it.

From 1811—the year of the arrival of the Lord Selkirk Settlers, the Red River Colony was under the direct control of the Earl of Selkirk.

This was the proprietary Government, until 1820, when the Selkirk's executors transferred their charter to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1834, with the aid of the Council of Assiniboia, until 1869.

At first the duties of the Council were largely judicial, and covered an area of 50 miles radius around the settlement.

In 1869, the Imperial Government passed the Rupert's Land Act, and the Red River Settlement became the Province of Manitoba.



## ***Politics and Elections***

### ***Discussions - Arguments - Hecklers***

There was always as I recall it, a very lively interest in the elections. I remember how the old timers gathered together on the bank of the Red River, near the old ferry, in East St. Paul, before an election to discuss the issues. Old John Henderson, a fiery speaker, made some statement about the Government, when a heckler shouted out - Proof! Proof! Prove it!

Henderson replied, "Proof - proof - do you ask for proof - Good Heavens, that ferry boat couldn't hold all the proof I could give." That was enough—he didn't give the proof asked for, but he silenced the heckler.

My recollection goes back to the days of the Hon. John Norquay, a native son who became the Premier of Manitoba. He was an eloquent speaker, an outstanding and distinguished leader. A fine monument stands in St. John's Cathedral Cemetery to his memory.

### ***Who's That, They Call the Government?***

Hearing a lot about the Government, what they did and didn't do, an old native lady, a near neighbour of ours, was heard to have said, "Whose that they call the Government? I wonder if it was him who passed here yesterday in a fine buffalo robe coat?"

Elections were great occasions in the early days.

## *An Interlude*

### **A Story Told of a Parson in a Country Town Parish—**

#### **Could It Be True?**

A Clergyman in a rural Parish, one day looked out of his study window and saw a load of hay upset, in a ditch in front of the Rectory. A boy of about 12 or 14 was frantically trying to fork the hay back.

The Parson recognized the boy as belonging to one of his country parishioners. It was about lunch-time. He went out and greeted the lad and invited him to lunch. The boy was reluctant to accept the invitation, but he was over-ruled and made to come in. The boy ate his lunch but was crying and very unhappy. When lunch was over, the Parson said, "Now I'll help you with the hay—don't you feel better now?" "Yes," sobbed the boy, "but my father will never forgive me for coming in here." "What do you mean," said the Parson, "Your father and I are very good friends. I'll drive out and explain how I brought you in. Is your father home?" "No," said the boy sadly. "Where is he?" asked the Parson. "He's in the ditch out there, under the load of hay," replied the lad.

Archdeacon Fortin, Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Winnipeg, ended one of his sermons with this peroration: "I would rather go to Heaven in a Red River Cart than go to Hell in a Pullman Car."



## ***Outstanding Personalities of the Red River Settlement***

Sheriff Colin Inkster - 50 years a Sheriff - 50 years Warden of St. John's Cathedral. I remember the old Sheriff very well. He lived to the fine old age of 91 - an erect figure, a sturdy character, a genial and friendly personality - he held a high place of honour in his day and generation. His two sons, Rupert and Colin, were school mates of mine at St. John's College. To be invited to spend a weekend at the home of the Sheriff at Seven Oakes, was a coveted honour, by every boy in the College school.

The Sheriff was a devoted Churchman - his long office as a Rector's Warden is a notable record. He, I believe, was deputed to meet Bishop Robert Machray at St. Paul, Minnesota, and accompany him to Winnipeg.

Speaking of his meeting Bishop Machray, the Sheriff is recorded as saying, "I shall never forget the first impression the Bishop made on me. Although I was only a mere lad, I could see he was no ordinary man. He was tall and thin, with a jet-black beard and piercing black eyes. The reverence which he then inspired in me, went on increasing as long as he lived."

The following is a brief sketch of his life, furnished me from our Provincial Library and which I think will be of interest to many: Sheriff Colin Inkster was born August 3, 1843, and died of pneumonia on September 28, 1934. He was survived by two sons and two daughters. Mrs. Inkster, his wife, died May 20, 1925, and his eldest son, Rupert Inkster, who succeeded his father as Sheriff of the eastern judicial district of Manitoba died in 1928. The Sheriff was Rector's Warden of St. John's Cathedral for over 50 years.

Colin Inkster was born on the historic spot where 27 years before had occurred the only battle ever fought near Winnipeg's site, that of Seven Oakes. He was of Scottish lineage on both the paternal and maternal sides; his grandfathers were natives of the Orkney Islands and had come to the Red River settlement with Lord Selkirk's colonists. His father and mother, John Inkster and Mary Sinclair, were married in this country.

John Inkster was a farmer in early life and, later, a storekeeper. From 1857 to 1870, John Inkster was a member of the famous Council of Assiniboia which was the legislative vehicle of the Hudson's Bay Company government. John Inkster died in 1874.

From 1871, the year of Sheriff Inkster's marriage by Archbishop Machray to Miss Annie Tait, a daughter of William Tait, also a native of Orkney, until 1876, Colin Inkster was a member of the Legislative Council of Manitoba. In 1876 the legislative council was abolished. Colin Inkster, as Speaker, gave the casting vote for its abolishment, and in the same year, he commenced his half-century of office as Sheriff. He had in 1874 been appointed minister of agriculture and during the two years of its existence, had been president of the legislative council. He retired as Sheriff on February 4, 1928.

### ***The Rev. J. W. Matheson, M.A., Dean of Rupert's Land - 1847-1934***

A brilliant scholar - a charming personality - "J. W." as he was frequently called, was popular, or I should say, a man greatly loved. Dean Matheson was born in Old Kildonan, a descendant of one of the families of the original Selkirk settlers, he has been referred to as - An Outstanding Canadian - and One of the Builders of the West.





As one, a few years his junior, he was my tutor at St. John's College, and years after it was my privilege to sit at his feet and to benefit by his ripe scholarship.

I want to frankly state here at the outset that what I am about to write is copied just about word for word from the record I obtained through the Provincial Archives, and therefore as well authenticated story of his life. Comparatively few, except those who came into personal contact with him, knew of his rare gifts, his accomplishments, or of his long and valuable service to the Anglican Church and to the community at large.

The reason for this is that he hated crowds and refused to be drawn into the spotlight. He was a kindly, simple and humble man, yet he had great dignity. His scholarship amazed even his closest friends. He mastered the art of teaching and the many he instructed at St. John's College have fond remembrances of the personal interest he took in all the students and of his sound advice.

He graduated in both arts and theology at St. John's College taking honours in classics - equally proficient in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, he was a recognized authority on these languages, especially as a Greek Exegete, in which he was a past-master. Before commencing his career as a teacher and professor in the College, he ministered in three rural Parishes. First in the old Parish of St. Andrews, called the Lower Church, then in Souris and Boissevain. He held almost every important post in the Anglican Church. He was a nephew of the late Archbishop Matheson.

**An Outstanding Native Son**—A youth at the time of the Riel Rebellion, Dean Matheson knew the history of Manitoba



probably better than any other man. He was an excellent raconteur and his stories of the early days in the West thrilled those who were fortunate enough to hear them. Above all, he was a jovial and delightful person to know, and once to know him was never to forget him, and furthermore to know him was to love him.

## ***Archbishop Robert Machray, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L.***

A Distinguished Career - A Life Marked by Ardent Devotion,  
Personal Energy and Earnest Piety.

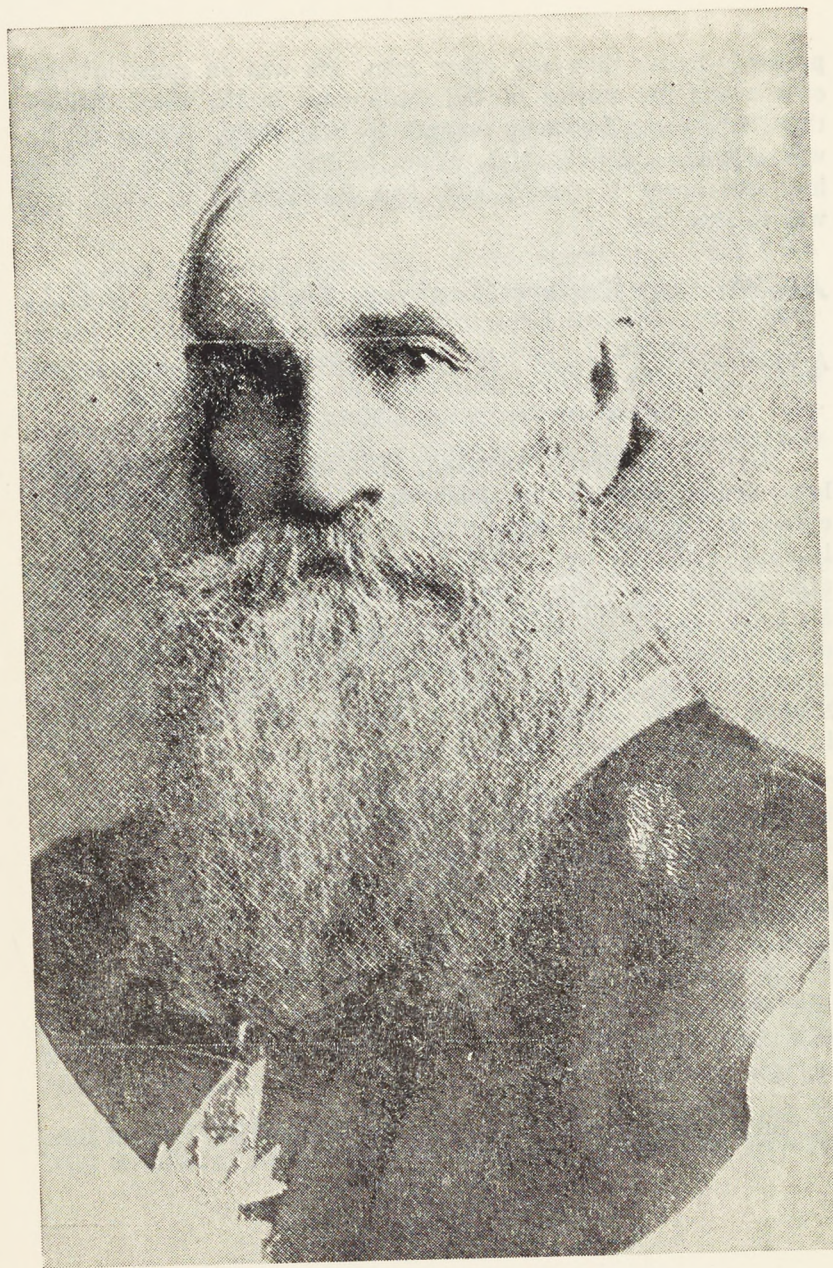
Born in Aberdeen, Scotland, 1821, educated at King's College, Senior Wrangler of Cambridge University, he was consecrated in England as Bishop of Rupert's Land in 1865. Before leaving England he ordained the Rev. W. C. Bompas, who afterwards became the Bishop of the Yukon. In 1875 he became Metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province and later Primate of all Canada. In 1893 he was honoured by Queen Victoria, who appointed him "Prelate of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George." After a long and distinguished career in the Red River Settlement, he died at the age of 73. R.I.P.

### ***A Personal Appraisal***

In appraising the life of the great Archbishop, I am always filled with amazement and wonder that so great a man should have been chosen for the remote and then almost unknown territory of northwest Canada, known as Rupert's Land. Surely it was none other than the Hand of God or divine Providence that brought this great scholar and leader to a land so vast and inhabited chiefly by Indians and scattered white settlers engaged in the fur trade.

Robert Machray was in every sense of the word, a Great Man.







## ***The Archbishop - A Parish Minister***

For a considerable period, I don't know exactly how long, Bishop Machray assumed full charge of St. Paul's Parish, Middle-church, my old home church. There was no task too humble for him to undertake. I am told he even conducted some kind of a choir practice, gathering a few of the natives to lead the singing - though if there was one thing the Bishop couldn't do, was to sing - out there he was, this eminent scholar in the role of a Parish Minister, doing the most ordinary tasks, and doing them well.

## ***The Archbishop - The School-Master***

His first task as Bishop was to revive the College School, of which he was the Headmaster, teaching mathematics and Latin. He took infinite pains in doing the most humble tasks. I recall him at the blackboard demonstrating a problem in geometry; the board in no time filled with figures, evolving the equation with a rhythm as from a musical score.

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## ***Archbishop Robert Machray, D.D. LL.D.***

Chancellor of the University - Primate of All Canada

The medal is of the Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, graciously bestowed by Queen Victoria.

**Latin prose exercises**—I recall the meticulous care he exercised in correcting our Latin prose weekly selection, ruling out the wrong translation and carefully writing the correct translation above. Imagine the work this involved in about 20 exercises.

## *The Archbishop - The Disciplinarian*

The Gate-Book—a so-called “Gate-Book” was kept, in which the misdemeanours of the boys were inscribed with the names of the offenders. Misdemeanours included infringement of the rules and such offences as a failure in the monthly tests or examinations.

The Archbishop every month examined the Gate-Book and the offenders were summoned before him for corporal discipline which was to be taken over his knees and spanked. I know whereof I speak—I’ve been there—it was taken as a matter of course in those days.

The Archbishop was a man of few words—“actions spoke louder and sometimes more painfully than words. On the contrary, if you were summoned to appear before Canon Samuel Matheson, the then Headmaster, he had an impressive way of talking to you, that made you feel very much ashamed of yourself, especially if he shook his long beard at you. The boys used to say, “I’d rather take a licking from ‘Old Bob’ than get a lecture from ‘Sam’.”

I remember once Canon Matheson, as he was then, caught me carving my initials on one of the school desks. Pressing his hand on my shoulder from behind, he said, “Pritchard, try and make your mark in the College in some other way.” That remark stung me to the quick - it cured me once for all of ever carving my name with a pocket knife.



## *The Archbishop - The Administrator*

Soon after his arrival in the Red River Ssettlement known as Rupert's Land, the first General Synod was held in Winnipeg. Bishops and delegates came from Eastern Canada.

There was some preliminary speculation as to who should preside - the question was very definitely settled, when about two minutes to the opening hour, young Bishop Machray arrived, took his place on the platform and announced, "As this Synod is convened in my diocese, I'll take the Chair." It was known from then and on who was the ruling figure and dominating personality of the Canadian Church. It was no surprise that he was chosen as the first Primate of All Canada.

## *The Archbishop - The Man of God*

Archbishop Matheson, who succeeded Machray, always referred to him as "My Illustrious Predecessor." I remember him telling of his being with the old Archbishop at the time of his death. At his request he read the service in the Prayer Book for the visitation of the sick. As the Archbishop was very weak and failing, he curtailed the service a little but evoked the response, "You have left out one of the prayers - there's time to say it yet."

Archbishop Robert Machray saw great changes during his lifetime in Rupert's Land. He saw the advent of the railway, of the telephone and telegraph, of the founding of the University of which he was the Chancellor, of the subdividing of his huge diocese of 10,000 square miles, into eight dioceses and himself the Metropolitan and the Primate of All Canada.

I consider it a great privilege to have been confirmed and ordained to the sacred Ministry by him.

So ended the career of a Great Bishop, the Outstanding Personality of the Red River Settlement.

## ***Dr. Curtis Bird, M.D.***

1838 - 1876

First Native Ooctor of the Red River Settlement

A Man of Culture and Refinement

An Outstanding Personality

I can only write of Dr. Curtis Bird from what I have heard of him. He antedated my memory - as a matter of fact, he died in the year I was born. He died at the early age of 38. He was a great friend of Canon S.P. Matheson, afterwards Archbishop and Primate. They went together to England in 1876. While in England Dr. Bird contracted pneumonia and died there.

I really know nothing of Dr. Bird, except what I learned through hearsay memory of what I have gathered from archives and from James M. Reid of Toronto who kindly sent me the photo-print and some interesting data, all most interesting. All I know or have heard of the doctor is good - that he was a kindly man, sincere and successful in his profession and very highly respected. The fact that he was a bosom friend of Archbishop Matheson and went with him to England is indicative of the kind of man he was.



## *Bird's Hill*

Dr. Bird's property in St. Paul's Parish was a river lot extending toward Bird's Hill and which was so named after him. His descendants and family connections are legion in the Red River settlement and indeed throughout the Canadian northwest. Dr. Curtis Bird holds a high place as an outstanding personality of the Red River Settlement.

## *Dr. Bird and Politics*

Doctor Curtis Bird, son of the Chief Factor James Bird, Governor of Assiniboia, was deeply interested in the political life of the Settlement. He was elected member for St. Paul's Parish in the Legislative Assembly and was made Speaker.

## *An Unhappy Incident*

As the Speaker of the House, he gave a ruling respecting the incorporation of Winnipeg as a City, which caused considerable controversy and brought him into bad odour.

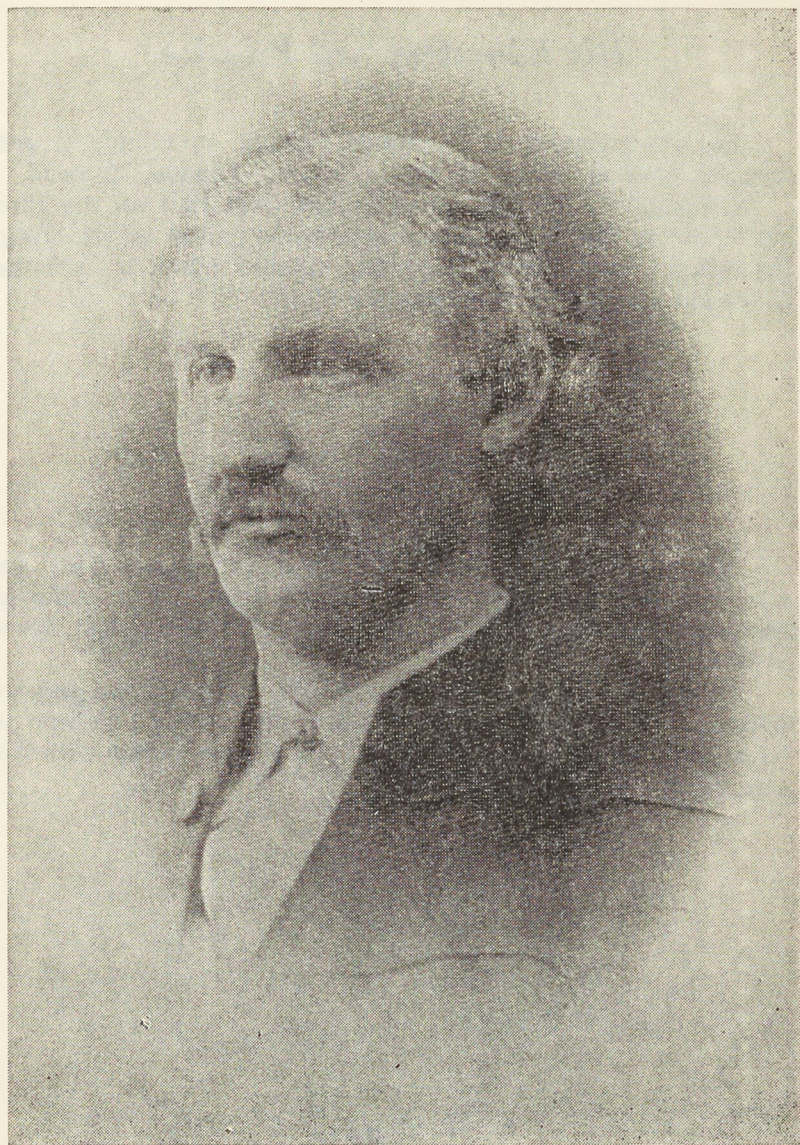
## *Tarred and Feathered*

He was lured out one night ostensibly to see a patient and was waylaid, smeared with tar and left unconscious on the highway, by a gang of disguised men. A reward of \$1,000 for the discovery of the culprits was offered but without any result.

Dr. Curtis James Bird, M.D., son of Chief Factor James Curtis Bird and Mary Lowman, a teacher at the Red River Academy, was born at the Red River Settlement in 1838, member of the first legislative assembly of Manitoba in 1870. Speaker from February 5, 1873, to December, 1874. He died while on a trip to London, England, in 1876, and was buried there at Cheshunt cemetery.

Original photograph in the Manitoba Archives.  
Copy by Art Photo Studio, room 5, 494½ Main St., Winnipeg.





## *His Education and Practice*

He was educated at St. John's College, in Winnipeg, and took his medical course at Guy's Hospital, London, England.

Returning to the Red River he practiced first on the Bird estate and in Middlechurch and afterwards moved to Winnipeg. He owned a drugstore on Bannatyne Avenue which boasted the first soda fountain in the Canadian West.

## *The Bird Family*

Many of the descendants of James and Curtis Bird are scattered here and there throughout the land. It's a name of honourable mention and definitely linked with the Red River Settlement.

In the year 1900 my mother and I went to England and we were the guests of Miss Bird in Shrewsbury, who I believe to be a sister of our Dr. Curtis Bird. We are connected with the Bird family on my mother's side.



## ***Our Heritage***

In Summary review of the early days, I think we may say,  
definitely and assuredly—

We have a “goodly heritage.”

## *Supplement*

Christmas Greetings composed by the author and sent to his friends over a period of nine consecutive years.

The joy and gladness of our holy religion is centred in the Heavenly Birth, the feast of the Nativity.

The Heart of Creation is Mirth,

The Heart of religion is Joy.



*Christmas, 1962*

*His Poverty — Our Riches*

"He was rich, yet for your sakes, He became poor."

— II Cor. VIII-9

Jesus is a stable born  
Gladdens our hearts each Christmas morn  
He had not where to lay His Head  
That riches may be ours instead.

"As poor yet making many rich"  
Redemption grace doth all enrich,  
Out of the treasure house of graces  
God in His love doth all embrace.

Dear friend, it's good for us to send,  
Our love and greeting to extend  
Something of this Love Divine  
That fills our hearts at Christmas time.

**Christmas, 1961**

***The Charity of God***

**"The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."**

**— Gal. II:20**

The Son of God on Mary's knee  
Speaks most tenderly to you and me;  
In lowly adoration may we bring  
Our Greetings to the newborn King.

Not in some impersonal way,  
The Story of each Christmas Day  
Tells of a cherishing care  
That each and everyone may share.

Friends and dear ones far and near  
Exchange their gifts and tributes rare;  
Our cares and worries disappear,  
It's the Birthday of our Saviour dear.



**Christmas, 1960**

***Peace I Leave With You, My Peace I Give  
Unto You***

**— St. John XIV 2-27**

Greetings, and Christmas cheer  
To all who love our Saviour dear,  
Peace, Peace, His Birthday Gift  
Our hearts to Him with joy uplift.

Peace, Peace, the Angel's song,  
Peace on earth to us belong,  
We greet each other in His Name,  
A joyous Christmas to proclaim.

God bless us with the Interior Peace,  
The Holy Child came to release,  
Before His lowly crib we bend,  
Our loving wishes to extend.

**Christmas, 1959**

***Bethlehem, The House of Bread***

**"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which  
come to pass." — St. Luke 11:15**

Happy Souls, to Bethlehem are drawn  
To see the new-born King,  
The Infant Saviour welcomes all,  
Who hear the Angels sing.

"Happy Christmas", is the word,  
Our usual salutation,  
It comes to us, as from our Lord  
A gracious benediction.

And so to Bethlehem we go  
The Home of Bread, His Altar Throne,  
For there again, as long ago  
He claims us for His very own.



*Christmas, 1958*

*"Mercy and Truth are met together,  
Righteousness and Peace have kissed each  
other."*

— Ps. 85:10

The sweetest story ever told  
Is centred in Bethlehem of old;;  
Mercy and Truth in fond embrace,  
Reflected in our Saviour's face.

The Birth of Jesus is the kiss of God,  
The Son of Man, the Son of God,  
And in this Fellowship Divine,  
A blessed Christmas may be thine.

The kiss of God is ours to share  
With all our loved far and near,  
With loving greetings to bless the morn  
On which the Prince of Peace was born.

**Christmas, 1957**

***"That I may go unto the Altar of God, even  
unto the God of my Joy and Gladness."***

**— Ps. XL III, 4**

Joy and Gladness to one and all,  
Lovers of Jesus now recall  
The Birthday of our Saviour dear,  
With holy joy, and love sincere.

Joy and Gladness, let Mary sing  
Magnificat to her Lord and King.  
For in her arms, her little Son  
Is God Incarnate — the Holy One.

Altar of God — how good to know,  
That Thou art with us here below,  
To Thee, Our Hope, Our Peace, Our Joy  
Our sweetest melodies employ.



**Christmas, 1956**

***“Mercy and Truth are met together,  
Righteousness and Peace have kissed each  
other.”***

**— Ps. 85:10**

### **The Friendship of God**

It's Christmas Day, once more,  
And friends of God meet to adore  
The Christ-Child on His Altar Throne,  
The Saviour of God, our very own.

Oh for a closer tie with Thee  
Since Thou, my God, has come to me,  
I greet Thee Lord with joy sincere  
With all my love, O Saviour dear.

*Christmas 1955*

*The Prince of Peace*

*"His Name shall be called Wonderful,  
Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting  
Father, the Prince of Peace."*

The "Wonderful", the "Mighty God",  
In lowly rainment clad,  
The "Counsellor", "The Prince of Peace"  
Brings joys to earth that never cease.

The Word made Flesh — Incarnate Love,  
The Everlasting Father from above,  
All centred in the Holy Child,  
Our Saviour Jesus, meek and mild.

Prophetic vision saw from afar,  
The Mystic glow of Bethlehem's Star,  
And we in turn rejoice and sing  
Glory to the new-born King.



## *Christmas, 1954*

*"Let them also be Merry and Joyful."*

— Ps. LXVIII. 3

*"Singing and making melody in your heart  
unto the Lord."*

— Ep. V. 19

"Merry and Joyful" that's our song,  
For Christmas is here, and we are glad  
To be among the joyous throng  
To greet the new-born Son of God.

"Mercy and Joyful" — yes we are,  
For Bethlehem is not far away,  
It's in our hearts; we've seen His Star  
Be born in us, dear Lord, today.

"Merry Christmas"— then we say  
To you and all those dear to you;  
Just in the good old fashioned way,  
God bless you all, His life renew.

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and  
we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of  
the Father) full of grace and truth."

— St. John 1. 14

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